

Project Summary/Abstract

Project Title: Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five (PDG B-5) Planning Grant
Response to HHS-2018-ACF-OCC-TP-1379

Applicant Name: Massachusetts Executive Office of Education (EOE)
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This project proposal reflects the partnership of two Massachusetts secretariats- the Executive Office of Education (EOE), and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). These secretariats and the agencies within them are responsible for all state-level funding, policymaking, planning, oversight and data related to programs serving children birth to five. While EOE is the applicant for the grant, our proposal reflects a collaborative project management structure, with the Secretaries co-chairing an Executive Steering Committee that will oversee grant activities. The day to day management of the project will be through an Operational Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Undersecretaries of EOE and EOHHS, and comprised of senior leaders from key child-serving agencies. This cross-secretariat and cross-agency project management structure has been key to the successful implementation of several other system-building efforts in Massachusetts. We believe that using this structure will help move the work forward faster, and sustain it after the grant period ends, thereby increasing the opportunity to improve outcomes for Massachusetts children.

EOE is the designated state entity to manage the grant because its purview includes three of the four participating agencies- 1) the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), which serves as the State Administrator for the Child Care Development Block Grant; 2) the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), which is the State Education Agency; and 3) the Children's Trust, which operates the Healthy Families home visiting program. The fourth participating agency, the Department of Public Health (DPH), is part of EOHHS, and oversees home visiting programs as well as Early Intervention and WIC.

We will use data and information from these participating agencies, in partnership with parents and key stakeholder groups, to inform 1) a comprehensive needs assessment and 2) produce an action-oriented strategic plan. The strategic plan will focus on the three final key activity areas in the grant – 3) improving parent choice and knowledge through an online parent portal, and through more effective implementation of screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ); 4) expanding and coordinating training for all staff working with children; and 5) an integrated data system that will enable to analyze and track child services and outcomes longitudinally, from home visiting to early intervention to early education, through K-12 education, and into post-secondary. Through this PDG B-5 project, we will significantly improve outcomes for infants, toddlers and preschoolers across the Commonwealth.